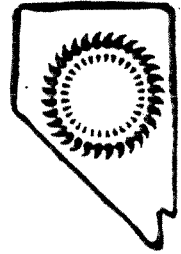


NEVADA CLIMATE SUMMARY



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February was an unusually cloudy and wet month for all of Nevada. The cloud cover also caused days to be cooler than normal and nights to be generally milder. Precipitation was not only well above normal at most locations, but the number of precipitation days was more like Seattle or Portland than Nevada! For example, Las Vegas had 12 wet days and a normal of only 3, Reno 18, and a normal of 6 days, Ely 21, and Elko 25 wet days.

The unusually persistent cloud cover caused a lack of the usually abundant sunny skies, with less than half of the normal sunshine hours recorded. For example, Las Vegas had only 55% of the possible sun hours and a normal of 81%.

Las Vegas also had the wettest February on record (as did several other locations), and the 5th wettest for any month since records began 90 years ago. The 2.85" February 1998 total was about 2/3 of the normal annual amount and six times the average February total! The previous wettest Februarys were 1931 with 2.71" downtown, and 1993 with 2.52" at the Airport. Las Vegas' wettest months were March 1992, 4.80" at the Airport, and 4.76" in January 1916 downtown.

Wettest locations February 1998 were Daggett Pass 7.97", Incline 7.75", Stateline 7.41", all in the Tahoe Basin, and nearby Woodfords, 6.33". In the South, Kyle Canyon had a whopping 13.51", Lee Canyon 11.67", Elgin 8.01", Red Rock Canyon State Park 7.31", Pioche 6.02", Cathedral Gorge State Park 5.32", Beatty 4.47", Cottonwood Cove 4.36", Sandy Valley 3.53", and Pioche-Lister 3.45". These totals are 2 to 6 times normal.

Snowfall was also above normal, with for example 79" at Lee Canyon, 78" at Kyle Canyon, 77" at Incline, 62" at Manhattan, 44" at Glenbrook and 40" at Tonkin Springs (north of Eureka). These readings do not reflect snowfall in high mountain areas where amounts were heavier. For example at 8500 foot Tahoe Meadows the snowpack on March 1st was 11 feet deep, or about 1 ¼ times normal.

Water Year precipitation (October 1, 1997 – March 1, 1998) is near or above normal over most of the Silver State. The driest locations are in lower portions of the Walker River, where Yerington, Hawthorne, and Wabuska have had only 2/3 of normal, and in Northern Elko County where Wildhorse Reservoir, Jarbidge and Owyhee are about ¾ of normal. Wettest locations, considering averages were in Eastern and Southern Nevada where 5-month totals are about 1½ to 2½ times normal. Upper Colorado River Areas above Lake Mead are near normal.

Temperatures were near normal, with extremes of -20° at Charleston near month's end, and mid-70's around Lake Mead and along the Colorado River. The mercury also fell below zero at Minden (-1°), Belmont (-2°), and Pioche Lister (-3°).

John W. James

State Climatologist

Delmar Leatham has been the Official Weather Observer for Overton for the past several years. In addition to recording temperature and precipitation daily, he also measures the evaporation. In fact, his is one of only eleven evaporation pans in Nevada. In this dry State knowledge of the water balance is extremely important, and can only be accurately obtained with paired precipitation gages and evaporation pans.

Delmar was born and raised in Southern Idaho, and lived in California as a boy. He has been in the Moapa Valley for the past 35 years and for the past several years has served as Manager of the Overton Power District. He and his wife Joan have six children. His most outstanding weather occurrence – the unusually cold 7° reading at Overton in December 1990.

